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Training for Work



Green Certificate Program Job Shadowing
Government Training programs Work Experience
Part time work Colleges and Institutes
Community Organizations

Alberta
HUMAN RESOURCES
AND EMPLOYMENT

the people
& workplace
department

This booklet is written for people who are considering training for work. It will assist your learning and work exploration and improve your ability to make life and work decisions. It will help you:

- identify your preferred learning style
- explore the advantages and disadvantages of various training options that suit your learning style and career goal
- discover where to find training opportunities in Alberta
- connect with further information and resources.

This publication is available on-line through the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website, Alberta's leading on-line source for career, learning and employment information. To access this and additional publications, visit

www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop

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Catalogue Item #534083

ISBN 0-7785-1608-3
© 2004 Government of Alberta,
Human Resources and Employment
03/2004 - 30M

This information was accurate, to the best of our knowledge, at the time of printing. Labour market information and educational programs are subject to change, and you are encouraged to confirm with additional sources of information when making career, education and employment decisions.

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Is this book for **you?**

This book is about finding the training you need and want for work. This book is for you if you:

- want to work but need to develop job-related skills
- have been unemployed for some time and want to get back into the workforce
- want to enter the job market quickly
- are employed and want to move ahead
- are not considering long-term academic studies at this stage in your life.

In any of these situations—and in many others—finding the right training will help you achieve your goals.

There are training options to suit everyone. *Training for Work* describes different training approaches and opportunities and outlines where to find those opportunities.

What is training?

Training teaches the skills needed for work and provides an opportunity to practise those skills.

Why choose training?

Training prepares people for specific jobs. Most jobs require some skills (practical “know-how”) and some knowledge and experience related to the job. Sometimes you can learn these

Training: the act or process of... learning a skill

(Canadian Oxford Dictionary)

on the job. Sometimes you must take short courses or a longer program of study. Sometimes you can learn what you need to know as a volunteer or from a friend or mentor.

Training for work has many advantages. It can:

- help you make the transition from school to work, from unemployment to employment, from one job to another
- provide work experience
- build self-confidence
- sometimes let you earn while you are learn.

Where is training available?

You can get training through formal programs offered by educational and training institutions or government-funded programs. You can find it through a school, an employer or through your own self-study.

Training for work doesn't always come in a neat package. It's not always offered in a classroom. It doesn't even have to take place during normal work hours. It is really part of your lifelong learning. Training includes schooling, skills you learn at work and skills you learn elsewhere.

Q/A

What is the difference between training and education?

Training is related specifically to learning skills. Education generally refers to a lengthy period of formal study that covers various subject areas. Education focuses on providing knowledge rather than skills. Although an education may include training, overall it is much broader in scope. Therefore, most training takes less time to complete than many post-secondary education programs at a college, technical institute or university.

tip

Look for opportunities to learn. Grab them and take advantage of them whenever you can.

You can find training opportunities anywhere—from helping a friend assemble a barbeque to taking a gardening course and then volunteering to work in a community garden.

Training is available in many different places:

- on the job
- in classrooms
- in offices
- at work sites
- at conferences
- on farms
- at home.

Employers provide training. Volunteer groups provide training. Industry safety associations provide training. Your friend the dog groomer might provide training. Once you start looking, you'll be surprised at the many sources of training available for the work you want. Training is wherever you choose to find it!

Training is an investment. Training takes time, commitment, some discipline and patience. Successful investments reward investors with continued growth. Good investments pay off, sometimes sooner, sometimes later. Training, too, pays off. And it only takes a little planning for you to make your training a good investment.

To enjoy the benefits of training sooner, start now. Do your research, do your planning and make a commitment to take that training.

Begin at the beginning.

Any investment worth making starts with self-assessment:

- What is your present situation?
- What do you need?
- What interests you?
- What are your goals?
- How do you learn best?

Then reflect.

Do you think some form of training would help you achieve your goals? If so, you may need to do some looking around to find out what is available that suits your needs. If you feel unsure about your options, talk to a career counsellor.

And ask for advice.

There are plenty of resources to help you find training opportunities, but the legwork is up to you. It is worth taking the time to find and choose the right training.

improving
yourself = improving your job
opportunities

How and where do you **learn** best?

What is your learning style?

One of the first steps in choosing training is to find out how you learn best. If you are able to match your learning with your preferred learning style, you will probably do better in any learning or training situation.

If you know your learning style, you may understand:

- why you have found it easier to learn at some times and more difficult at others
- how to learn new skills more effectively
- why you work better with some people.

People learn using three basic learning styles.

Learning by seeing (the visual learner)

If you learn best by seeing how things are done, you need pictures and visual images to learn. People who learn from illustrations in manuals are visual learners. For example, if you learn by seeing, when your friend moves, you will want to see a map to get to her new house.

Your eyes are your most important learning tools.

Learning by listening (the auditory learner)

If you learn best by listening, you remember verbal instructions easily. You like to learn by listening to the radio, CDs or tapes. For example, when

Know your learning style's strengths and weaknesses.

your friend moves, you will remember the directions to her new house when she gives them to you over the phone.

Your ears are your most important learning tools.

Learning by doing (the tactile learner)

If you learn best by doing, you prefer to involve your hands and the rest of your body in the learning process. You take notes even when notes are handed out. You like hands-on work. For example, you probably prefer to find your way to your friend's new house on foot, by bike, or by car, by "feel."

Your hands and body are your most important learning tools.

Take the short quiz on page 8 and 9 to find out whether you prefer one learning style over another. There are no right or wrong answers. This is only an exercise to start you thinking about the way you learn. Use this as an opportunity to try something fun and find out something new about yourself.

Check each statement that you feel is true for you and then add up the check marks. The category with the most check marks suggests your favourite learning style. If you check about the same number of statements in each category, you probably use all three learning styles.

I learn by seeing

(I am a visual learner).

- _____ I notice details, errors, missing buttons or scruffy shoes.
- _____ I doodle, or make detailed drawings.
- _____ I like seeing how a task is done before trying it.
- _____ I have difficulty following spoken directions.
- _____ I like reading books with pictures and graphs better than books with no illustrations.
- _____ I follow directions better if I can see them on paper.

I learn by listening

(I am an auditory learner).

- _____ I prefer listening to the news rather than reading about it.
- _____ I learn best when I can discuss my ideas with others.
- _____ I need an explanation to understand charts, graphs or maps.
- _____ I learn better by listening to recorded information (voice or music).
- _____ I like to talk about what needs to be done before actually doing it.
- _____ Listening to music is one of my favourite pastimes.

I learn by **doing** (I am a tactile learner).

- _____ I prefer participating in an activity rather than watching others do it.
- _____ I feel confined in a classroom.
- _____ I like to set up equipment (assembling kid's toys, hooking up a stereo).
- _____ I am a hands-on learner.
- _____ I find it hard to concentrate if I have to sit still for long periods.
- _____ Learning something is easier when I can try it out.

Most people use all three styles to learn. But, if you think about it, you probably find you prefer one. If you are wondering how most people learn, studies show that:

- 80 per cent of us prefer to learn by seeing and doing (visual and tactile learners).
- 20 per cent of us prefer to learn by listening and talking (auditory learners).

Now that you know your learning style, you can use this information to help you choose the best training for you. As you read about the different training opportunities in this book, ask yourself which ones would suit your learning style. You will probably find that certain kinds of training appeal to you more than others. Now you know why!

The goal is to know your learning style's strengths and weaknesses. If you know you learn best by using your hands, then look for training and work that allow you to learn by actively doing the work. If you must also learn technical information from texts or documents, talk to your trainer about your learning style and ask for help in completing your training successfully.

tip

Knowing your learning style is important to your success. Keep your preferred learning style in mind when choosing a job or training.

What is your best learning environment?

If you think you need some training, it may also be worthwhile to think about how you want to get that training. You may be able to get training as a student, with your present employer or outside the workplace.

Once you start looking, you will discover you can choose the training environment that suits you best. Do you prefer to learn at a work site, on a computer or in a classroom? Some people prefer to learn as they go or through activities they do during their free time. Some prefer to take formal training programs or courses.

Training can be obtained in different ways:

- one-on-one
- hands-on
- classroom
- distance learning
- self-study

One-on-one training

One person works directly with you to help you learn. You learn by watching, listening and practising. If you are training to become a motorcycle mechanic, for example, most of your learning will likely take place at a motorcycle maintenance shop. A qualified

mechanic will be assigned to teach you the various skills you need. For each task, while you watch, the trainer will demonstrate how to use the equipment, how to make the required repairs and how to stay safe while you are working. When you are ready to practise, the trainer will be there to guide you.

This is a great way to learn because you get personal attention from experienced workers. If you feel unsure about anything, there is someone reliable you can ask for help. With ongoing feedback, this kind of learning is a terrific way to quickly build skills and self-confidence.

Hands-on training

You learn by doing the work. The work may be manual (involve using your hands), such as learning to be a short-order cook. In this case, you will have to learn to slice onions, tomatoes, carrots and lots of other vegetables quickly and with consistent results every time. To learn the right technique, you'll have to do the work again and again. One day you will get the slicing and timing just right.

Although you learn by doing the required tasks, hands-on training is not always manual. If you are learning to be a receptionist, for instance, your employer may ask you to introduce the company and yourself in a certain way when you answer calls. It may take a few tries to get the words out correctly and to learn how to direct calls. After you do the work for a while, it will come easily.

Classroom training

You learn with others, usually from one or more instructors. You may sit at a desk reading, writing, listening and discussing. Or you may work in a group. In many classroom settings you will also learn on equipment.

Distance learning

You study and complete assignments at home. This allows you plenty of freedom and flexibility. In addition to submitting your assignments, you may be expected to participate in finding material on the Internet, join teleconferencing sessions where you talk to instructors and other students by phone, or communicate with them using the Internet.

You may also be asked to listen to audiotapes or radio programs, or to watch films, videotapes, DVDs and television programs.

Self-study

Welcome to the “You University!” You develop your own program of study to suit your own training needs and learning style. Your program can consist of any kind of training or combination of training approaches necessary to help you reach your goal.

If you are a self-disciplined person and ready to learn what you need at your own pace, here are a few tips:

- Set a training goal and create your own program.
- Use the employment resources at an Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centre (see the Resources section) or a public library to get started.
- Follow up with reading or watching instructional videos.
- Take some on-line courses.
- Research using the Internet.
- Take some classes for fun or interest.

What kind of training suits **you?**

Formal or informal, public or private—training opportunities are all around us. Sometimes we just don't notice because we still think training is something that happens in a school setting. If you think of training as an opportunity to learn skills, you will find opportunities where you didn't think to look before: at the job site, through recreational activities or on the Internet. The following is a summary of the different types of training and where to find it.

Volunteering

How to Obtain It: Join a volunteer organization. Many unpaid activities can provide training for work.

Mentorship

How to Obtain It: Find someone you trust who can support your efforts to learn.

Part-time work

How to Obtain It: Try out a job and get paid to find out if it is for you.

Work experience

Includes:

- work experience
- job trials
- job-shadowing

How to Obtain It:

Find an employer willing to give you an opportunity to try out a job before hiring you.

...find an opportunity that
speaks to you and, go for it!

Combining on-the-job and classroom training

Includes:

Alberta Journeyman Certificate (Apprenticeship) programs

Alberta Occupational Certificate Training programs

Alberta Green Certificate Program

Training in the military

- in the reserves
- full-time careers

How to Obtain It:

Take a hands-on training program that rewards you with a certificate or diploma, showing you can work to meet industry standards.

On the job

Includes:

Training opportunities where you are employed

- labour organizations
- teams at work
- job transfers
- temporary (secondment and acting) positions
- volunteering to help

Industry Associations

Short Courses

How to Obtain It:

Take advantage of all the ways to train while you are working: join a team, take courses offered by your employer, volunteer to help with social events, help out co-workers or other employees who do different work or take a transfer to a different position to gain new skills.

Freda

By volunteering for two years at her local community information centre, Freda was able to become the paid co-ordinator of information referral services at the centre. She now oversees the work of about 20 volunteers who assist her with this work. "I'm so lucky," Freda says, "My experience as a **volunteer** not only helped me to acquire the computer skills and background that I needed to get the position, but it also helps me to better relate to the volunteers that I am now co-ordinating."

Your learning should be interesting and fun, even though it will require commitment and energy. When you find a training opportunity that speaks to you, go for it! Say "Yes! This training is for me. I can learn what I want here and now!"

The choice is all yours.

Volunteering

When you volunteer, you work for no pay. The payoff, however, is that you can learn new skills and receive free training while helping your neighbourhood or community. Volunteers find their work very rewarding. Their efforts are usually well appreciated, and the learning environment is very supportive. As a volunteer you can get the job experience that employers like to see on a résumé. A volunteer supervisor or team member may make a good reference.

If you're interested in music, volunteering at a music festival may give you an opportunity to learn something about electronics, how to work as part of a team and how to improve your organizational skills. This adds up to experience and skills that you can include on your résumé.

Employers like to hire people they know. In some communities, volunteering at a school improves your chances of getting hired as a teacher's aide. Volunteering to help a physical therapy practitioner at a senior's centre could lead to a job as a physical therapy assistant.

The more responsible the job, the more training you will need. When you volunteer, you need to know your interests, skills and goals just as if you were applying for paid work. This knowledge will help you choose the right volunteer role.

Large and small organizations use volunteers. The smaller organizations may be staffed entirely by volunteers. Community sports teams, computer user groups or environmental groups are run by members committed to helping the group's goals. Some large organizations, such as hospitals or arts organizations, use volunteers to supplement the services they provide.

Volunteering pays off! You can:

- learn new skills
- get work experience
- gain confidence
- learn about the workplace
- explore different occupations
- connect with your community.

tip

When you are choosing an organization to volunteer for, consider your personal interests and goals. If you're not sure where to start, look up community volunteer centres in the phone book. These centres operate like employment agencies—they have a list of volunteer jobs available and will try to match you with the right organization and job.

The Alberta Human Resources and Employment publication, *Volunteering: How to Build Your Career by Helping Others*, offers tips on volunteering and finding the right group to volunteer for. You can find the book on-line at www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop or in print at any Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centre.

Avida, a 37-year-old woman from central Alberta, had worked on the family farm, **volunteered** at her children's school and been active in the local agricultural society and her church. When she began looking for a job, she learned that her life experience was valuable in the job market. She was able to turn the management, organizational and people skills she had developed into a job as the manager of a health and fitness centre.

Martin, age 28, is one of five deejays that work regularly in the dance clubs of a large Alberta city. "I'm not number one," Martin says, "but I'm right up there."

He has a full-time day job at a retail store and does his club work on the side. He thinks a role in the music or entertainment business could become a full-time career option for him at some time in the future. Martin learned this skill by practising on his own, but he also credits a **mentor** for showing him the ropes. A well-established deejay provided Martin with a lot of support and coaching. This associate and mentor is the owner of a record store, which provides good contacts in the music scene for both of them.

Mentorship

Many of the best training situations are found through people you already know and new contacts you make by networking. Networking involves talking to people who know about the work or other activities you're interested in. During a networking

When you have a mentor, you don't feel quite as alone as you search for the right path in work and life. A mentor is someone you trust. A mentor is always ready with praise and a helping hand, or with encouragement when things don't go quite right. Invest in yourself

Mentor: an experienced and trusted advisor or guide

(Canadian Oxford Dictionary)

conversation you might ask for the names of other people you could contact to find out more information.

In many cases it is through networking that you discover the mentor you need. A mentor is someone who guides you. You may have a mentor who helps you with personal or financial matters. It is also a good idea to find a mentor who can help you in your search for work or career plans.

by finding a mentor who can help you take on the challenge of learning additional skills.

You may find your mentor among family members or friends. Take advantage of their skills and experience. For example, your cousin may work in sales for a department store. If you want to work in the office there, your cousin can tell you about the work and suggest ways for you to prepare in case a job

opening comes up. When that happens, you are ready. You know about the employer, you know about the work, and you have taken a course so that you have all the qualifications necessary. If you get the job, you can thank your cousin, who was a good mentor.

If you want to be a carpenter and your neighbour has experience in this trade, offer to help him when he begins work on a set of bookshelves for his home. This gives you an opportunity to find out if you really enjoy this kind of work and to learn from a qualified tradesperson. This training costs nothing but goodwill and can help lead you directly to your employment goal.

You may find your mentor through an employer or an industry association. Some employers have formal mentorship programs where, if you show interest, your employer will match you with an experienced employee. A mentor can also be a good reference when you need one.

When you get the job you want, hang on to that mentor! Find new ones! It always helps

to have someone to discuss your concerns with or ask questions about work. As you work to move ahead in your career, your mentor can continue to guide you.

Some advantages of mentorship include:

- personal training and attention
- training based on knowledge and trust
- the opportunity to learn new skills outside your present job
- access to information or insights about the workplace
- moral support throughout your job search
- no financial cost.

tip

The best mentor may be very close to home. Look to family, friends and neighbours as good possibilities.

Natalie, an 18-year-old who has just graduated from high school, thinks she might want to pursue a career in agriculture, but she is not sure. She has signed up for a two year **work-experience** program in organic farming to check it out.

She has begun her work experience at a large farm in central Alberta, where she will stay for six months. Following this, she'll be assigned to several different farms, spending a few months at each one.

Work experience, job trials, job shadowing

Many employers train new employees. They may also give potential employees the opportunity to find out whether the work is suitable by offering work experience, a job trial or a job shadow.

The advantage of a work experience or job trial situation is that you receive some training for a job while trying it out.

Work experience

In a work experience situation you're putting skills you have learned elsewhere to the test. Work experience is usually one part of a larger training program provided by a community organization, college or technical school. After you complete the program, a counsellor can suggest employers who can offer you work experience or you can find them on your own. As a work-experience participant, you may or may not be paid, depending on the situation.

At the end of the program you will have job experience to your credit and an employer reference. If the employer thinks you did a good job and you like the work, you might be hired. If not, the experience and reference will be useful when you start looking for your next job.

Work experience may also be offered as a part of job-readiness training (training that prepares you for work in a specific work environment). It includes on-the-job (workplace) training related to work of your choice and may include courses such as communication skills, job safety skills and computer literacy skills.

Building service worker, Aboriginal policing and security, construction basics and graphic imaging are just some of the programs available through Alberta colleges that include a work-experience component.

tips

Find a work experience situation that matches your interests and occupational goals. You'll find that you'll be keen to learn new skills and offer your best efforts—and your employer will value your work!

If you are looking for training programs that include work experience, remember that these programs are also called co-operative education (co-op) programs. Work experience may also be referred to as a practicum.

Job trials

A job trial is an agreement between you and an employer that allows you to try out a job for a set length of time. It gives you an opportunity to learn skills on the job and get paid. It also allows you to find out if that particular job is what you want to do. At the same time, it gives the employer an opportunity to assess you as an employee without making a long-term commitment.

Job shadowing

If you are curious about a job, you may be able to job shadow someone working in the position. A job-shadowing experience allows you to follow a worker for a short time to find out exactly what the person's daily duties and activities are like. You are there as an observer, not as a worker.

Job shadowing is often offered as a component of employment programs and/or in larger organizations where employees are encouraged to continue learning and move ahead. However, you can create your own job-shadowing opportunity if you find a sympathetic employer. If you are trying to decide which trade to apprentice in, for example, ask the employer you want to apprentice with if you can job shadow a journeyman in the trade. This provides you with direct exposure to the trade and can help you make your final choice.

Marie

When Marie's children had grown up and left home, she asked an employment counsellor to help her decide what type of work she might like to do. She narrowed her choices down to two: a teaching assistant in a school and an office administrator. Marie then **job shadowed** in a school for a while and was surprised to learn that this type of job did not suit her at all.

As you can see from Marie's story, another advantage of a job-shadowing experience is finding out what you *don't* like doing.

Darryl, 25, has a full-time job that he likes but he is interested in exploring other types of work and perhaps changing his career in the future. To meet this goal, he also works **part-time** at a bakery and café where he likes the atmosphere and has opportunities to network and learn some new skills.

Part-time work

Part-time work can provide part-time training. Often it's a good way to find out whether or not you will like the work. Your part-time job will help you decide if you want to look into more formal training in the future.

If you can't find the full-time work you want, it may make sense to work part time in your field of interest.

If you need full-time work to pay the bills, consider taking two part-time jobs. The job that pays the bills may not necessarily be related to your interests. The other job offers work in an occupation you want to learn about and eventually work in full time. This second job provides on-the-job training and experience in something you like doing.

If you're unsure about the kind of work you want to do, part-time work gives

you the chance to try out something new. You won't have to make a full-time commitment and you'll be learning as you earn.

Part-time work:

- provides job experience
- introduces you to new people
- lets you experience new work environments
- trains you in new skills
- pays the bills.

To find the part-time work that you want, talk to friends, neighbours, neighbourhood businesses or visit one of the Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centres (See Resources section). Read the classified ad sections of the newspapers. Check the community job boards and job-bank websites.

Combining on-the-job and classroom training

Some jobs allow you to do the hands-on portion of training at work and learn the required technical material in a school setting. This may sometimes include home study. Many jobs today require technical know-how and other knowledge best learned through specifically designed courses or programs.

Certain jobs require technical training as well as training on the

job. If you want to learn a trade, for example, you will need to take technical training.

Some jobs may not require you to have completed technical training to *apply* for the position, but if you *have* done this training, you have a better chance of being hired.

Alberta Journeyman Certificate (Apprenticeship) programs

To work in a designated trade in Alberta you must have a certificate that shows you have completed the required hands-on and technical training. If you decide to become a tradesperson, you start as an apprentice in an apprenticeship program for the trade you choose.

Once you're certified as an apprentice or journeyman, you may join the trade union that represents the interests of workers certified in

Bryson, age 28, is a fourth year steamfitter apprentice. For the past three and a half years he has worked for several large oilfield companies. He's currently doing some work at a training centre operated by his union. He is required to attend classes at a technical school for eight weeks each year, for which he pays a tuition fee. During the rest of his four-year training period he has received a paycheck that has increased as he advanced through the program.

Apprenticeship is a good choice for Bryson, not only because he loves the work, but also because he did not want to be a full-time student. He became a parent at age 19 and wanted to provide for his family.

Once he gets his journeyman status, Bryson says he will continue to have opportunities to improve his skills. His union offers extensive upgrading programs at little or no cost. The learning never ends.

tip

Many factors will affect your decision about the kind of training best suited to your situation. The overall time commitment is a big one! Make sure you understand how much time you will have to spend on any course or program of study before you make the commitment.

tips

Methods of delivering technical training to apprentices are changing.

In some trades and in certain regions of the province, technical training may be available one day a week, evenings or weekends, on the job site or through distance learning. Check with your nearest Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training office (see the Resources section) for details.

The apprenticeship trades offer a large variety of employment opportunities well suited to hands-on, tactile learners. For people who like to learn by doing, the trades can provide very satisfying work.

that particular trade. Trade unions provide members with training to upgrade job-related skills that they will need to progress from journeyman to other employment levels within the trade.

Apprenticeship trades provide:

- 80 per cent on-the-job training
- 20 per cent technical training
- lifelong learning and earning opportunities.

There are 50 designated trades in Alberta including baker, cook, gasfitter, hairstylist, instrument technician, landscape gardener, sheet metal worker and welder.

People who train for a trade learn the job through apprenticeship and technical (classroom) training, usually at a college or technical school. To become an apprentice you must first meet **one** of these requirements:

- Complete Grade 12 (some trades don't require Grade 12, but many employers prefer to hire high school graduates)
- Write and pass an entrance exam

- Take part in the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) while you're still in high school, earning an income and credit toward your apprenticeship and your high school diploma.

To receive an Alberta Journeyman Certificate in one of the designated trades, you will have to:

- meet registration requirements
- register by submitting a completed apprenticeship application to Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training
- find an employer to apprentice with
- complete a specified number of hours of on-the-job training and formal instruction at one of Alberta's training schools
- take exams in the courses of formal instruction.

To begin an apprenticeship trades program, you must find an employer who will hire you and provide you with the required on-the-job training. You make a commitment to a one- to four year

program of on-the-job training and technical instruction. The length of program depends on the trade. Once you have completed your apprenticeship and passed your exam, you will be a certified journeyman.

Alberta Occupational Certificate Training programs

There are four designated occupations in Alberta:

- construction craft labourer
- gas utility operator
- steel detailer
- warehousing.

You may work in a designated occupation without an occupational certificate but having the certificate shows that you have the training and experience and can do the job according to industry standards. A certificate:

- recognizes your skill level
- provides more job opportunities within the occupation and industry

- provides more opportunity for career development.

To earn an Alberta Occupational Certificate in one of the designated occupations, you will have to:

- register as a trainee with Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training
- complete a specified number of hours of on-the-job training.

Trainees in designated occupations must learn clearly identified tasks, although no particular process is set out for learning the tasks. Some designated occupations may require formal training. Some may require only work experience. Others may require a combination of both.

When you demonstrate that you can properly perform the tasks expected, Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training awards you an occupational certificate.

tips

Many agencies and schools offer courses to prepare people for registering in apprenticeship trades programs. Study for these courses on your own time at home, at an educational institution or through a community organization.

For more information

For more information on designated trades and occupations, visit the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training website at www.tradesecrets.org

tips

If you like to learn by doing and you like the idea of growing things or working with animals, look into a farm technician's work. Agriculture offers plenty of hands-on learning situations at all levels of employment.

For details about the Green Certificate program, visit the website at www.agric.gov.ab.ca/greencertificate

Alberta Green Certificate Program

If you're looking for work in agriculture, you can learn on the job and take courses as part of a certificate program. The Green Certificate program provides on-the-job training and experience for people to become farm technicians, production supervisors and farm managers.

The program is designed like an apprenticeship program. There are three levels of certification. To reach the first level, you must successfully complete three courses. The Level 1 Green Certificate qualifies you as a farm production technician.

If you decide to take the next level of training, you can choose from one of these areas of specialization:

- cow-calf beef production
- dairy production
- feedlot-beef production
- field crop production
- irrigated field crop production
- sheep production
- swine production.

You work to achieve certain standards in skills related to your area of specialization, guided by a trainer. Green Certificate trainers provide on-the-job instruction and a place for trainees to practise the skills they are learning, usually on a working farm.

If you like the idea of working in rural Alberta, you can get a feel for agricultural work by registering for the Green Certificate program. Agriculture is an industry that offers a variety of challenging jobs.

Green Certificate training provides some important benefits. Trainees:

- develop industry-standard skills and knowledge
- get recognition for existing and new skills
- expand their career opportunities and options
- can prepare for further education at a college or university

Training in the military

Is working for the Canadian military a good fit for you? Canada's Department of National Defence provides Canadian Forces training in a variety of technical occupations—at no cost. You'll find more than 100 job choices in the Canadian military.

In the reserves

If you join one of the army, navy or air reserves, you may be eligible to receive part-time training for a military trade. The reserves provide basic military training and training in the trade you select. Tradespeople in the naval reserve, for example, include naval communicators, inspection divers, cooks and supply technicians.

Another advantage of joining the forces as a member of a reserve is getting a sense of what it might be like to pursue a military career without making a long-term commitment.

To qualify for this training, you need at least a Grade 10 high school education, although when you apply you may be unemployed, employed or a student. Training takes place on evenings, weekends and during the summer. While reservists are paid, salaries are based on the position's military rank.

Todd had just graduated from high school when he made the decision to join the naval reserves. He didn't want to attend post-secondary school following graduation and had been thinking about a **military career** for several years. Todd wasn't sure that he wanted to commit to a full-time career with the military and felt that joining the reserves would be the perfect opportunity to "test the waters." He signed up to become a boatswain (professionally trained sailor) and took some pre-basic training on weekday evenings and Saturdays.

During the following summer he took basic recruit training. After successfully completing this training he went to Halifax to take a sea environmental course followed by trades training.

Todd says that joining the reserves has been a great adventure, has fed his passion for travel, and has given him a real sense of pride from his many accomplishments. He is learning a trade while being paid and doesn't even have to pay for the training. He is keen to continue learning new skills and has recently made the decision to join the Canadian Forces full time.

For full-time careers

If you choose a full-time career with the Canadian Forces, the government will train you as part of your commitment to the forces. You will have the opportunity to learn and practise new skills and advance through specialty courses.

Many positions in the army, navy and air force offer training for full-time careers in technical fields. Unskilled recruits attend basic training followed by specific job training or a two year college diploma program. They are then posted to a unit.

If you chose technical combat systems training with the navy, for example, you would learn how to operate and maintain the electronic and combat equipment in Canada's warships. This training includes a subsidized two-year college program leading to a technician's diploma in either electronics or electromechanics. As a qualified naval electronics technician, you might work in technical areas related to communications, acoustics, tactics or weapons.

If you love physical activity, excitement and travel and are eager to learn and earn qualifications for a technical occupation, the Canadian Forces may offer you some excellent training possibilities.

For complete information about training available as a member of the Canadian Forces, visit the website at

www.recruiting.forces.gc.ca

On the job

You can learn the skills you need to do a job while you work in the job. This is on-the-job training. On-the-job training means that someone at work teaches or shows you how to do a specific job. You may already have some skills and experience, or you may not. Either way, you receive a salary while you learn the skills for the job. Many employers provide on-the-job training for new employees. Some

tip

Ask a career and employment consultant at an Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centre (see the Resource section) for more information about government funded on-the-job training programs.

employers provide training on the job to help current employees increase their skills and work toward other positions.

On-the-job training gives you the opportunity to:

- earn money while you are being trained
- gain skills and job experience at the same time
- stay employed while you improve your skills.

Ask a potential employer before you are hired if they provide training and, if so, what kind of training. If you learn best in a one-on-one training situation, it will help you to know whether this kind of training is an option at that particular workplace. If you hope to keep learning new skills and progress within a company, you will want to know whether that is possible.

Michel, age 21, wanted to work as a server in a restaurant. When he heard about an opening with a neighbourhood restaurant, he applied for the job. The restaurant agreed to hire him if he completed **on-the-job training** and started work by bussing tables. Michel had to learn the menu, study the employee manual and pass a written and practical test to show he had the knowledge and skills to be a server. Every so often he was expected to update his menu knowledge by attending a food and wine sampling.

Frances

Frances, who is 44 and lives in a large Alberta city, was finding it difficult to get back into the workforce after being a stay-at-home mom for over a decade. She was almost ready to give up looking for a job when she found a temporary position as a data entry clerk with a not-for-profit agency. The pay was lower than she would have liked but the environment at the agency appealed to her. She felt it was a good way to get her foot in the door and learn while she earned, and she was right.

Frances has learned a lot **on the job** in just a few months and, as a result, her role at the office has expanded. She has become a database operator and assistant volunteer co-ordinator. She is hoping to obtain a permanent position with her current employer or to transfer the skills and experience she has gained to a similar job at another not-for-profit agency.

At an interview, or through the employer's website, you might try to find out:

- the kind of training required for the job
- whether the employer provides on-the-job training
- where the best training for the job is available, if the employer doesn't provide training
- any other kinds of training the employer offers, such as health and safety training
- training opportunities within the organization that could help move you ahead
- how training costs are handled.

One Alberta employer says, "If you contribute something of value to your employer, the employer is likely to offer you as many perks as possible and make an extra effort to help you to grow and thrive and learn."

Training opportunities where you are employed

Once you are in a job, make the most of every opportunity to learn more skills. Don't be afraid to ask your supervisor for regular feedback. Ask what else you can do to learn more within the organization.

Keep looking for training opportunities at your job. Employers appreciate willing and eager employees, like Frances, who are prepared to take on additional challenges. Skilled workers are valuable, so it's beneficial to the employers to help you grow within the organization. If you're interested in learning new skills for a different job, let your supervisor know. There may be some training-on-the-job options you don't know about.

Labour organizations

Private and public sector unions (labour organizations) serve the workers of any employer that has a collective bargaining agreement in place between the workers (represented by the union) and the employer. Workplaces with such agreements are commonly referred to as “union shops.”

The important thing to know about unionized workplaces is

that training and advancement opportunities in the organization are described in the collective agreement for all workers, at all levels of employment. Employers generally provide training and opportunities for advancement. The union and employer work together to keep employees informed about these opportunities.

Employers appreciate
willing and eager
employees

Loretta, 35, is the office manager at an Aboriginal society that assists young children having difficulty in school. Loretta was first hired as a receptionist and to carry out general office duties. At that time, the office was just being set up. As a result, Loretta had lots of opportunities to **learn new skills** by doing any work she thought she could handle. Early on, Loretta kept the office operating while a new director was being hired.

Loretta has taken on all the challenges presented to her. She has advanced to a role that involves doing payroll, accounts payable and receivable, and graphics and layout. She now uses many computer software programs.

tip

Keep watching for training opportunities. Read the employee notice board at work. Read union newsletters. Stay informed about your company and talk to your supervisor. Employers are usually pleased to support workers who want to learn more.

Teams at work

You can always learn something new from someone else. Team and committee work provide excellent training opportunities. Whether the team is planning a weight-loss program, a marketing plan, a fundraiser for a charity or organizing lunchtime speakers, your participation as a team member is an opportunity to learn. You not only learn about other people's work but also have the opportunity to:

- take on a new responsibility
- learn a new skill
- discover new abilities (organizational, communication skills)
- spark new interests
- find a mentor.

Teamwork also provides you with an excellent opportunity to improve your people skills. Teams usually meet regularly, either in person or on-line. This gives you a chance to practise expressing your ideas clearly, speaking to a group and working with a variety of people.

Employers like to hire and support good communicators. Employees who are good communicators will have an advantage over those who are not when competing for a position where these skills are important.

Job transfers

Consider asking for a job transfer to learn new skills. Even if the position is at the same level as your current job, taking on a new role opens up all kinds of possibilities you may not have thought of. Some people might think that jumping into a new position is "trial by fire." But some people like it hot! To stay interested in work, they like to keep learning new things.

Many employers recognize the value of providing their employees with a variety of work experiences and, as a result, encourage employees to try out new roles. Some pay for additional training, if necessary.

Temporary (secondment and acting) positions

Larger organizations, such as educational institutions and government agencies, may offer a qualified employee a different job for a specific period of time. The employee may be asked to help out on a specific project or in a particular work unit. These opportunities introduce employees to new work groups within the organization, and to new skills, new colleagues and new challenges.

Sometimes, for example, an employee may agree to take a “secondment.” An employee who is seconded takes on a position and all its related responsibilities.

Seconded employees understand that they will work in the position for a set period of time and will return to their original job when the specified period is over.

It is not uncommon, however, for employees who agree to secondments to move to different jobs afterwards because of the new and valuable skills they developed in the seconded position.

Similarly, employees often have the opportunity to take on responsibilities for vacant positions for a short period of time. Employees interested in ongoing learning often value these free training opportunities. Any opportunity to take on new responsibilities helps you learn more skills and gain valuable knowledge and experience. Learning new things and meeting new people always brings new challenges, but embracing these challenges keeps life interesting.

Volunteering to help

At times you might notice that a co-worker needs assistance. You may be in a position to offer help. In the process, perhaps you will learn some of your co-worker's responsibilities. You might also discover a new interest and the desire to learn related skills. When this happens, follow up! Talk to your supervisor and find out if there's some way you can continue the learning you have begun.

tip

If you know the industry you want to work in, contact the industry association for specific information about the training needed for jobs you are interested in.

Industry associations

Industry associations represent employers. Associations provide a number of services to their members, including job banks, professional development and training, certification, licensing and networking opportunities. Some associations develop training programs for employers to deliver. Some, like designated industry training associations, provide job-specific courses for members' employees and contractors. Some provide courses in industry-related business management. Training is sometimes delivered by the association and sometimes by a local college or other training organization.

Each association is different, so get to know which might be helpful to you. If you want to develop more industry-related skills, look into which associations offer the training you want and need. To find out, talk to your supervisor or fellow workers, your employer's human resources department, or call the Alberta Career Information Hotline (see the Resources section).

Industry associations can provide useful contacts if you want information about:

- apprenticeship
- job-specific training
- where to get the best training for the job
- employers who are hiring.

Short courses

For some people, training little by little works best, when time and money are available. Many workers build up a set of skills for an occupation by doing some self-training with a book or taking short courses whenever they can. This is common in seasonal industries such as forestry and construction, for example. In quiet months, a forestry worker may take a course in chainsaw safety, firefighting or basic woodlot management to improve employment opportunities. A construction worker might take a course in fall protection to improve safety skills and employment opportunities.

Many employers regularly offer training to their employees. Courses in occupational health and safety are common. In the oil and gas industry, employers often pay for workers to upgrade or learn new skills through courses offered at accredited training centres.

Some employers offer training in fitness, English as a Second Language, and driver

education and awareness. Others offer academic upgrading or skills development courses at the work site after work hours. Employees who take advantage of computer software training or public speaking may well improve their chances of moving ahead in the organization.

Training is an investment,
and a good investment
pays off

tip

If you are unemployed, but need only **one** course to get the job you want, training for that course may be funded by the government of Alberta. Check with a career and employment consultant at an Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centre (see the Resources section) to find out if you qualify.

Where do you look for **training?**

Government-sponsored training programs

A number of government-sponsored training programs and services exist to help Albertans prepare for and obtain employment. Programs include:

- skills development, including essential skills
- academic upgrading
- on-the-job training
- work experience
- job placement.

These programs are offered at:

- public training schools and colleges

- private training facilities.

The government of Alberta, in partnership with the Government of Canada, provides training for unemployed people and contributes to student funding.

To find out if you qualify for a funded training program, talk to a career and employment consultant at an Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centre.

Look and you'll see an opportunity...

You can find your local service centre by calling the Alberta Career Information Hotline toll-free at 1-800-661-3753 or visiting the Alberta Learning

Information Service (ALIS) website at www.alis.gov.ab.ca (click on Career Services Near You).

Q/A

What are "essential" skills?

Essential skills refer to basic reading, writing, math and communication skills. Workers need these basic skills to be able to follow instructions and understand health and safety information. Some employers offer their employees training in essential skills.

Irene, a 48-year-old woman living in a small town in central Alberta, wanted to get back into the workforce after spending 25 years raising her children. She had a high school diploma and some college business courses that she had taken over 20 years ago.

Irene began by taking a **government-funded program** that helped her identify her transferable skills and her interests. Then the program advisor connected her with her current employer. She has been working as a bookkeeper for a small retail business for the last 15 months. She also does some inventory, accounting and shelf stocking. Initially, Irene connected with the program advisor once a week to talk about the job and her transition from home to full-time employment.

Colleges and technical institutes

If you're looking for training, you may want to investigate training options at Alberta's colleges and technical institutes. They offer a wide choice of programs and courses. Although the courses offered vary with each school, they generally fall into one of these categories:

- one year certificate programs
- two year diploma programs
- apprenticeship programs
- short industry-related courses
- job-readiness courses
- academic upgrading
- continuing education.

To help you meet your training goals at your own pace, colleges and technical institutes offer full- and part-time programs. Courses are delivered over the Internet, through distance learning and home study, and in the classroom at different locations across the province.

Many colleges and technical institutes offer job placement services to their students.

Certificate and diploma programs

Both certificate and diploma programs prepare students for employment in a specific field or occupation. These programs are appealing to people who prefer practical, hands-on training. They require the completion of a number of courses, often followed by a work experience component (sometimes called a practicum).

Are you interested in shorter programs? If so, you might want to check out certificate programs. Certificate programs normally involve one year or less of full-time, hands-on study at a college or technical institute. Examples of certificate programs include teacher or nursing assistant, food service, office administration and computer information systems.

Diploma programs normally involve two years of full-time, applied study at a college or technical institute. Although most diploma programs tend to be longer than certificate programs, practical training is an important component. Examples of diploma programs include personal fitness trainer, forest or environmental protection technology and interior design technology.

Apprenticeship (trades) programs

To work in one of the 50 designated trades in Alberta you need an Alberta Journeyman Certificate that shows you have completed the required hands-on and technical training. Apprenticeship technical training is offered at colleges and technical institutes.

For more information on apprenticeship programs refer to the Alberta Journeyman Certificate (Apprenticeship) programs section of this book.

Short industry-related courses

Short job-specific and industry-related courses help people prepare for work or for apprenticeship training. These courses are practical and hands-on, designed with employers' needs and requests in mind.

The wide variety of courses available includes health and public safety, food safety and nutrition, cooking and baking, and many others. These programs are offered at public and private colleges and institutes.

Job-readiness courses

Job-readiness courses are designed for people who are unemployed or entering the workforce for the first time. These include courses that teach effective work habits and attitudes and help develop job skills. A good portion of this training takes place as supervised on-the-job training.

tip

Job-readiness courses emphasize practical, hands-on learning. If you like to learn by doing, this may be your route to the employment you want.

tip

If you are interested in academic upgrading, talk to a career and employment consultant at your local Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centre to find out how you can get started.

Academic upgrading

Some schools specialize in improving basic reading and writing skills, high school upgrading for adult learners, as well as courses that prepare people to challenge General Educational Diploma (GED) exams. Some employers may accept a GED as equivalent to a high school diploma. Contact the employers you want to work for to find out their requirements.

Continuing education

Continuing education refers to short courses offered for general interest or personal improvement. You may want more instruction in a computer program you use at work. You may want to take on responsibility for your community newsletter but first need to improve your writing skills.

Whether you take a course to satisfy a personal interest or to improve your workplace skills, what you take away from the course contributes to your lifelong learning.

When it comes to continuing education, your difficulty might be choosing from so many course options! Examples of continuing education courses include public speaking, landscape design, sewing, languages, writing, cooking, interior decorating and security.

Continuing education courses are usually offered in the classroom on evenings and weekends. If you have access to the Internet, however, many of these courses and resource materials are also available on-line.

Private colleges and institutions

Many private institutions offer vocational programs licensed by the Alberta government. These training colleges and institutions provide training in skills specifically related to occupations that are in demand in Alberta's growth industries.

Call centre operator, computer technician, native cultural arts instructor and radio broadcaster are a few examples of occupations trained at these schools. If you have basic reading, writing and math skills,

you can learn some job-specific skills by taking individual courses. One course may be enough to get you started in an occupation that interests you.

In some occupations, such as health care, clerical support, fashion design, computer technology, esthetics, floral design and food services, an employer may hire you if you have completed one or two courses, show enthusiasm for the work and have a good attitude.

Training is for life.

It's true that if you learn more
you can earn more.

tip

Ask a career and employment consultant at an Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centre (see the Resources section) to recommend the community organization in your area most likely to offer the services you need.

Community Organizations

Community organizations serve specific groups, such as women, youth, Aboriginals, persons with disabilities and recent immigrants. Some community organizations focus a large part of their resources on providing training for their community members. They offer various kinds of training, including:

- preparing clients for the work environment
- helping clients find employment
- teaching English language skills
- teaching basic math skills
- arranging work experience, job-trial or job-shadowing situations with employers
- helping newcomers to Canada understand the Canadian workplace.

Courses and programs provide basic and pre-employment skills training, career counselling and job placement services.

Individual career counselling services are designed to provide people with skills required in Alberta's workplaces.

Because organizations provide the services that are best suited to their particular group, the same services are not offered by all organizations. For example, an organization that works with newcomers to Canada may offer English as a Second Language training.

Both the provincial and federal government funds many services offered by community organizations.

Training? Who needs it?

Training is for everyone: students, people who need work, people already working and people who want different work, whatever their age.

Training is for life. It's true that if you learn more you can earn more. It's true that any training you choose may help you get a job, either today or tomorrow. It's true that training will help you look ahead and see far.

Training is an investment in your future only you can make. No one else can help you get where you want to go. Training has

got to be *your* commitment, taken on *your* time. So make it count! Choose the right path to your kind of learning, to your kind of work. This way you'll find the jobs, places and people you like to work with, and a way to succeed—in your life and career.

Look around and you will see an opportunity. Look again and you will see another. Opportunities for learning are everywhere. Once you start looking, opportunities will appear. Then all you have to do is make the commitment.

Training becomes you.

Let it become a habit!

Resources

Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE)

This government department has a website, call centres, a provincewide network of service centres and a variety of publications to help you make informed career, learning and employment decisions.

Click on the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website at www.alis.gov.ab.ca

ALIS is Alberta's on-line source for career, learning and employment information. You'll find the resources you need for making the most of your future. This includes print and

audiovisual career and workplace related resources. The Career section of the website provides occupational information, career-planning tools and career resources.

OCCinfo (Alberta Occupational Profiles on-line)

As part of the ALIS website, this site provides details of over 500 occupations, including duties, working conditions, salaries, advancement opportunities, and educational qualifications to help you find the right job and training for that job.

Website: www.alis.gov.ab.ca/occinfo

EDinfo (Alberta Educational Information on-line)

As part of the ALIS website, this site provides current facts about post-secondary education and training programs offered on site and through distance learning in Alberta and the rest of Western Canada.

Website: www.alis.gov.ab.ca/edinfo

Call the Alberta Career Information Hotline for answers to your questions about:

- career planning
- educational planning
- occupations
- work search skills
- the workplace.

Phone: 1-800-661-3753 toll-free in Alberta

Phone: (780) 422-4266 in Edmonton

Deaf and hard of hearing callers with TDD units call (780) 422-5283 in Edmonton or 1-800-232-7215 for message relay service.

E-mail: hotline@alis.gov.ab.ca

Website: www.alis.gov.ab.ca/hotline

Come in to one of the Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centres

Located throughout the province, the centres have information on occupations, career options, education programs and funding, and finding work. Many offices have a career resource centre with books, newspapers, magazines, and software and audiovisual materials. They also may have computers for Internet use and word processing, and phones and fax machines to use with your work search.

These resource areas may be called Labour Market Information Centres (LMICs) in some offices. You can also talk to a career and employment consultant. These services may be offered by other agencies in your community. Call the Alberta Career Information Hotline for the office closest to you.

Visit a Youth Connections office.

Youth Connections offers career services for people between the ages of 16 and 24 ranging from training options to job boards.

Offices are located in communities across Alberta. Call the Alberta Career Information Hotline for a Youth Connections site near you or visit the website at www.youthconnections.gov.ab.ca

Check out career, learning and employment publications

produced by Alberta Human Resources and Employment, these publications can be downloaded or ordered on-line through the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website at www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop. They are also available through the Alberta Career Information Hotline or any Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centre. Many of the publications are available free of charge to Alberta and NWT residents.

The Career Planner: Choosing an occupation

This workbook is for people who have done little or no career planning. By doing exercises, conducting research and making decisions, you can move closer to choosing an occupation.

Education and Training Planner

This book talks about the education and training programs in Alberta and how to get more information.

Finding Out: How to get the information you need to make the choices you want

This booklet describes where and how to gather information about career options. It shows you how to match your desires, interests, skills and values to career options, then explains where to find out what training and skills you need to reach your career goals.

The Investigator 2003-2004

This booklet provides information, phone numbers and websites for training, career planning and searching for work.

It's About Time...to choose a post-secondary education program 2003-2004

This annual publication provides information about education programs offered at Alberta colleges, technical institutes and universities.

Job Seeker's Handbook: An introductory guide to finding work

This basic guide to finding entry-level work is aimed at readers new to the job search process. Features sample cover letters and résumés, tips for completing an application form and interview preparation questions.

Workability Handbook

This book describes 32 factors that employers look for in workers, including attitudes, skills and work know-how.

Volunteering: How to build your career by helping others

This booklet describes the many benefits volunteering offers as a career-building strategy for gaining experience, adding new skills, making contacts and researching career ideas.

Other Provincial Government Resources

Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training

For information about apprenticeship and the trades in Alberta, visit the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AAIT) website or contact any AAIT office.

To find the office location nearest you, call the Alberta Career Information Hotline or visit the website at www.tradesecrets.org

Service Alberta

Contact **Service Alberta** for general inquiries on Alberta Government programs and services. Visit the Service Alberta website at

www.gov.ab.ca or call 310-0000 toll-free anywhere in Alberta. Outside of Alberta, call long distance at (780) 427-2711.

Phone lines are open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Monday to Friday) and voicemail is available after hours.



Deaf and hard of hearing callers with TTY equipment call (780) 427-9999 in Edmonton or 1-800-232-7215 in other Alberta locations.

Training—it's your commitment,
taken on your time. Make it count!

We'd like to hear from **you**

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Would you like to receive a catalogue of our products?

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12th Floor, 10030-107 Street, Edmonton, AB, T5J 3E4, Fax: 780-422-5319

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